United Nations A/64/817

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 June 2010

Original: English

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda items 69 and 104

Promotion and protection of human rights

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Letter dated 10 June 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the outcome of the Arab Initiative for Building National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking: Doha Founding Forum, which was held on 22 and 23 March 2010 in Doha, State of Qatar, under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned, Consort of the Emir of the State of Qatar (see annex).

It would be highly appreciated if the letter and its annex were issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 69 (promotion and protection of human rights) and 104 (crime prevention and criminal justice).

(*Signed*) Alya Ahmed S. **Al-Thani**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

10-40563 (E) 170610 240610

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Annex to the letter dated 10 June 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Doha Founding Forum

Arab Initiative for Building National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking

22 and 23 March 2010

Declaration

The Doha Founding Forum was held in Doha on 22 and 23 March 2010 under the gracious auspices of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, consort of His Highness the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, in order to announce the Arab Initiative for Building National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking.

Conscious of the gravity of the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, which has in recent years emerged as one of the greatest threats to the nature, security and stability of human communities, impacting on poor, developing and rich States alike,

Believing that our Arab societies are not immune to the dangers, challenges and impact of that phenomenon, which make it imperative to have a coherent legislative structure with which to confront it, and comprehensive infrastructure to protect persons from falling prey thereto and provide its victims with complete support, assistance and care, with a view to rehabilitating and reintegrating them into society,

Aware of the social and moral responsibility incumbent upon all States, community organizations, and national governmental and non-governmental institutions and bodies to play their part in confronting that phenomenon and take practical and determined steps to oppose it and address its impacts and resultant challenges; aware also of the need to raise public awareness, with a view to eliminating that phenomenon by using every possible means, because it represents a flagrant violation of religious teachings and human rights, freedom and dignity,

The State of Qatar being anxious to play its humanitarian and moral role in supporting projects that aim to advance humanity and society, and make a constructive contribution to the development of civilization, on the basis of the principles and values in which the State believes, that are set forth in its permanent constitution, and on the basis of the noble directives of His Highness the Sheikh, all of which confirm that society should be built on the foundations of freedom, justice, equality, beneficence, noble qualities, morality, respect for human dignity, human advancement and protection for freedom and rights, because the human being is the focus and lofty goal of all plans and projects for sustainable development,

On the basis of the foregoing, in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and in cooperation with the League of Arab States, the State of Qatar was instrumental in developing the draft Arab initiative for building national capacities to combat human trafficking, the aim of which is to build national professional capacities in various human trafficking-related fields in the Arab region,

Valuing the efforts exerted in Arab countries by the governmental and non-governmental mechanisms and bodies involved in the fight against human trafficking, Forum participants congratulate Qatar on having promoted the Arab Initiative,

On the basis of the Forum goals and the thoughts, guidelines and recommendations that were put forward in the working papers which were presented, and the additional exhibitions, workshops and activities that took place during the Forum,

Participants make the following recommendations:

I. With respect to regional and international cooperation to suppress human trafficking:

1. Arab States should be urged to ratify the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two supplementary Protocols, and the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

2. International cooperation should be strengthened and support should be provided for national anti-human trafficking capacities. Appropriate machinery should be provided for that cooperation in order to ensure that the phenomenon is controlled and confronted.

3. National anti-human trafficking offices should be established, among the duties of which should be the monitoring of the phenomenon and the establishment of a database. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an Arab office as part of the League of Arab States.

4. When anti-human trafficking measures are implemented, unjustified restrictions on freedom of movement should be eliminated.

5. States should bring national legislation into line forthwith with the provisions of the relevant international instruments, and those Arab States that have not already done so should promulgate anti-human trafficking laws, using as guidelines the model laws issued by the League of Arab States and the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

II. Building the national capacities of those responsible for enforcing anti-human trafficking laws:

1. A comprehensive plan should be formulated for the training of human resources working in the anti-human trafficking field at the preventive, protective and care levels, in order to build Arab capacities to deal effectively with human trafficking-related issues.

2. A set of training programmes should be organized in the form of seminars and workshops that use scientific studies and training activities during which training

needs and materials are identified, the impact of training is evaluated and ways of exchanging relevant expertise are established.

3. The expertise of Arab security training institutions should be utilized when arrangements are made for training courses for trainers and for disseminating expertise in and knowledge about the suppression of human trafficking.

4. Use should be made of the international expertise of the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations centre for training and documentation in the field of human rights in South-West Asia and the Arab region, Doha, in anti-human trafficking projects and in order to improve the efficiency and capacities of the relevant staff.

5. Sufficient financial support should be provided for the funding of training projects in every Arab State, in order to train and educate staff working in various anti-human trafficking fields, including prevention, protection and the provision of comprehensive care for the victims of trafficking.

III. The role of the media, Government institutions and civil society organizations in the suppression of human trafficking:

1. The role of the media:

(a) An Arab anti-human trafficking media strategy should be formulated, under the aegis of the League of Arab States. That strategy should be based on moral standards and rules and maintain a balance between freedom of expression and the need to protect Arab society from the negative impact of the media.

(b) There should be a much greater number of programmes aimed at raising awareness of the phenomenon and gravity of human trafficking and related causes and impacts.

(c) Standards and controls should be put in place with respect to the import, export, marketing and production of media materials in the Arab region, with a view to conforming to guidelines on and calls for the strengthening of moral and social values.

(d) States should prepare comprehensive awareness-raising programmes on the gravity of the problem and ways of combating trafficking in human organs. The awareness of patients and their families should be raised with regard to the importance of organ donation, in accordance with the laws and values set forth in religions and the relevant legislation.

(e) Emphasis should be placed on the principles and values of religious laws in order to support efforts aimed at suppressing human trafficking.

(f) Human rights-related efforts by goodwill ambassadors and public figures should be activated.

2. The role of civil society organizations and the private sector:

(a) The role of human rights-related civil society organizations should be activated in the Arab region and they should become partners in increasing the knowledge and awareness of Arab society of the severity of the phenomenon of trafficking in persons.

(b) The private sector in Arab countries should play the requisite role by providing appropriate employment opportunities for youth of both sexes in development projects that are aimed at addressing the problem of unemployment, which is one of the reasons for the phenomenon of trafficking in persons.

(c) Arab civil society organizations should find ways of providing the requisite assistance for the victims of human trafficking.

3. The role of educational establishments and research centres:

(a) Public education curriculums in Arab countries should provide details relating to the suppression of human trafficking that are appropriate for each educational level.

(b) The subject of the suppression of human trafficking should be included in university curriculums.

(c) Scientific research centres and advanced research departments in Arab universities should encourage research into and studies on the suppression of human trafficking.

(d) Training projects should be adopted in order to educate pedagogical institutions at all levels of public and university education in ways of teaching the subject of the suppression of human trafficking.

4. The role of employment and criminal justice institutions:

(a) Mechanisms relating to the implementation of employment recruitment legislation should be activated in order to guarantee workers' rights and regulate their obligations and avoid the problems that arise from inadequate follow-up of the application of the provisions of such legislation, which sometimes leads to human trafficking.

(b) Implementation of laws and regulations governing the operation of recruitment and employment agencies should be followed up, the reasons that drive workers to abscond and their exploitation should be addressed, and lists should be compiled and published of companies that do not comply with the laws in force.

(c) Departments should be established within courts and the Public Prosecutor's Office in Arab countries, with responsibility for considering issues related to organized crime in general and human trafficking crimes in particular.

IV. Confronting the impact of modern information technology on human trafficking:

1. Sophisticated legislation should be promulgated in order to regulate the use of information technologies and systems.

2. Means of combating modern e-crime should be updated, particularly with respect to human trafficking-related issues.

3. The capacity of all members of society to use modern technology should be strengthened, and its abuse should be prevented.

4. A joint Arab Internet site should be established as part of the Arab Initiative for Building National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking project, in order to assist in developing staff capacities and spreading awareness in that field.

V. Assistance for victims of human trafficking:

1. Consideration should be given to the establishment in each Arab State of a national fund for the provision of assistance to victims of human trafficking.

2. Government units and offices should be established in order to receive and advise victims of human trafficking on lodging complaints and bringing cases against the perpetrators of that crime.

3. Legal assistance, including exemption from legal fees, should be provided to victims of human trafficking.

4. The identities of victims of human trafficking should not be revealed to the media or the public and confidentiality should be assured during the relevant investigations and court cases.

5. Effective measures should be put in place to protect witnesses to human trafficking offences.

6. Legislation should be promulgated under which victims of human trafficking are exempted from criminal responsibility for the following crimes when they were committed as a consequence of human trafficking:

(a) Work in the sex industry.

(b) Working without a permit.

(c) Illegal residence.

7. Support and assistance should be provided to victims of wars, disasters, armed conflict and breaches of security and stability, in order to avoid any cases of human trafficking that could ensue therefrom.

8. Children should be protected against exploitation in begging, prostitution, the drugs trade, transboundary smuggling, underage employment and enforced conscription in armed conflicts.

9. Where they do not already exist, governmental and non-governmental institutions should be established in Arab countries in order to provide various aspects of social and humanitarian care for victims of human trafficking.

10. Support should be provided for victims of wars, armed conflicts and natural disasters.

VI. Confronting the impact on human trafficking of the financial crisis:

1. The social security network and social guarantees should be extended and the necessary support should be provided, particularly for women, in order to prevent exploitation in the sphere of employment.

2. Loans for microprojects should be made available to low income groups and job seekers.

3. Recruitment systems should be expanded and supported, and employment conditions should be improved during economic recessions.

4. Returning expatriate workers should be supported and entitled to social and financial services.

5. The investment climate in Arab countries should be improved by providing investors with incentives, and new employment opportunities should be created by attracting foreign capital.